

Meeting Date: May 18, 2023

Agenda Item No. 1

Agenda Item: Season Modifications, Spring Season
Chinook Salmon Fisheries

Bureau Chief Approval: LH

Prepared by: John Cassinelli, Anadromous Fish Manager

Background:

This agenda item concerns the modification of Chinook Salmon fishing seasons targeting adult anadromous Chinook Salmon in the Lower Salmon River and Little Salmon River. Fisheries staff will brief the Commission on the in-season returns for Snake River spring Chinook salmon returns and propose modifications to specific salmon seasons based on sliding scales developed with public input.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Idaho Statute 36-104(b)2 gives the Commission the authority to make a rule or proclamation establishing or modifying seasons and methods for the taking of fish. Fishing Rules are provided in IDAPA 13.01.11.

Public Involvement Process:

Public meetings to seek input on 2023 Chinook Salmon seasons were held in Riggins, Lewiston, Orofino, Coeur d'Alene, and Cascade during February. Fish and Game Regional staffs hosted each of the meetings to provide information on 2023 projected salmon returns and to allow for public comment on potential 2023 seasons.

Staff Recommendation:

Modify the approved 2023 fishing seasons for Chinook Salmon in the Lower Salmon River and Little Salmon River.

Justification:

Salmon and steelhead mitigation hatcheries were built to mitigate or compensate for fishing opportunity lost as a result of hydropower development. The Rapid River hatchery returns are coming in under the protected forecasted return. The proposed season modification would still provide anglers the opportunity to fish for returning adult hatchery Chinook Salmon produced at Idaho mitigation hatcheries while spreading out the harvest and ensuring broodstock collection across the run.